

Transcript of Reagan's U.N. Speech on the Nuclear Arms Race

Following is a transcript of President Reagan's address yesterday to the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament, as recorded by The New York Times:

Mr. Secretary General, Mr. President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

I speak today as both a citizen of the United States and as a man. I come with the heartfelt wishes of my people for peace, bearing honest proposals and looking for genuine progress.

Day Hammarstrand said 24 years ago this month, "We meet in a time of peace, which is no peace." His words are as true today as they were then.

More than a hundred disputes have disturbed the peace among nations since World War II, and today the threat of nuclear disaster hangs over the lives of all our people. The Bible tells us there will be a time for peace. But, so far this century, mankind has failed to find it.

The Tide of Belligerence

The United Nations is dedicated to world peace. And its charter clearly prohibits the international use of force. Yet the tide of belligerence continues to rise. The charter's intent has weakened even in the four years since the first special session on disarmament.

We must not only condemn aggression. We must enforce the dictates of our charter and resume the struggle for peace.

The record of history is clear. Citizens of the United States resort to force reluctantly and only when necessary. Our foreign policy, as President Eisenhower once said, is not difficult to state. We are for peace, justice, and always for very simple reasons. We know that only in a peaceful atmosphere, a peace-loving world, can we prosper as a people, and only when we are peaceful can we be confident, can America prosper as we have known progress in the past, has mankind prospered.

He said to those who challenge the truth of those words, let me point out at the end of World War II, the United States had the only undamaged industrial power in the world. Our military supremacy was unquestioned. We had harnessed the atom and had the ability to unleash its destructive force anywhere in the world. In short, we could have achieved world domination but that was contrary to the character of our people.

New Chapter for Mankind

Instead, we wrote a new chapter in the history of mankind.

We used our power and wealth to rebuild the war-torn economies of the world, both East and West, including those nations who had been our enemies.

We took the initiative in creating such international institutions as this United Nations where leaders of good will could come together to build bridges for peace and prosperity.

America has no territorial ambitions.

We occupy no countries and we have built no walls to keep our people in. Our commitment to self-determination, freedom and peace is the very soul of America. That commitment is as strong today as it ever was.

U.S. in Four Wars

The United States has fought four wars in my lifetime. In each, we struggled to defend freedom and democracy.

We were never the aggressors. America's strength and, yes, her nuclear power, have been the source of peace, not conquest. For democracy, not despotism. For freedom, not tyranny.

Watching, as I have, succeeding generations of American youth bleed their lives on the far-flung battlefields to protect our ideals and secure the rule of law, I have known how important it is to deter conflicts.

But since coming to the Presidency, the enormity of the responsibility of this office has made my commitment even deeper. I believe that responsibility is shared by all of us here today.

The Normandy Landing

On our recent trip to Europe, my wife, Nancy, told me of a beautiful sunset 22 feet high that she saw on a cliff on the coast of France. The beach at the base of that cliff is St. Laurent. But countless American family Bibles have written it in a fly-leaf and know it as Omaha Beach. The pastoral quiet of that French countryside is in marked contrast to the bloody violence that took place there on June 6, 38 years ago when the Allies stormed the Continent. At the end of just one day of battle, 10,000 Americans were wounded, missing or killed in what became known as the Normandy landing. The statue atop that cliff is called "The Spirit of American Youth Rising From the Waves." Its image of sacrifice is almost too powerful to describe.

The pain of war is still vivid in our national memory. It sends me to this special session of the United Nations eager to comply with the plea of Pope Paul VI when I spoke in this chamber nearly 17 years ago. "If you want peace, be brothers." His Holiness said, "let the arms fall from your hands."

Well, we Americans want to let them go. But we need more than mere words. More than empty promises before we can proceed.

We look around the world and see rampant conflict and aggression.

Sources of the Conflict

There are many sources of this conflict. One is the expansionist policies of the Soviet Union, the striving to obtain justice and security.

We must all work to resolve such disputes by peaceful means and to prevent them from escalating.

In the nuclear era, the major power bears a special responsibility to ease these sources of conflict and to refrain from aggression.

And that's why we're so deeply concerned by Soviet conduct.

Since World War II, the record of tyranny has included Soviet violations of the Yalta Agreements leading to domination of Eastern Europe, symbolized by the Berlin wall, and the gray monument to repression that I

visited just a week ago. It includes the takeover of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Afghanistan and the ruthless repression of the proud people of Poland.

Gerrill Warfare

Soviet-sponsored guerrillas and terrorists are at work in Central and South America, in Africa, the Middle East, in the Caribbean and in Europe, violating human rights and unleashing the world with violence. Communist atrocities in Southeast Asia, Afghanistan and elsewhere continue to shock the free world as refugees escape to tell their horror.

The decade of so-called détente witnessed the most massive Soviet buildup of military power in history. They increased their defense spending by 40 percent while American defense actually declined in the same period.

Soviet aggression and support for violence around the world have eroded the confidence needed for arms negotiations.

While we exercised unilateral restraint, they forged ahead and today possess nuclear and conventional forces far in excess of an adequate deterrent capability. Soviet oppression is not limited to the countries they invade.

Buttons Stamped in Moscow

At the very time the Soviet Union is trying to manipulate the peace movement in the West, it is stifling a budding peace movement at home. In Moscow, banners are scuttled, but are not taken down. They are arrested when even a few people dare to speak about their fears.

Eleanor Roosevelt, one of our first ambassadors to this body, reminded us that the high-sounding words of tyrants stand in bleak contrast to their deeds. Their promises, she said, are in deep contrast to their performance.

My country learned a bitter lesson in this century. The scourge of tyranny cannot be stopped with words alone.

So we have embarked on an effort to restrain our nation that has fallen dangerously low.

We refuse to become weaker while potential adversaries are being emboldened to their imperialist adventures.

Americans Are World Citizens

My people have sent me here today to speak for them as citizens of the world, which they truly are.

For we Americans are drawn from every nationality represented in this chamber today.

We understand that men and women of every race and creed can and must work together for peace.

We stand ready to take the next steps down the road of cooperation through veritable arms reduction.

Agreements on arms control and disarmament can be useful in reinforcing peace, but they're not magic. We should not confuse the signing of agreements with the solving of problems. Simply collecting agreements will bring peace. Agreements genuinely reinforce peace only when they are kept. Otherwise we are building a paper castle that will be blown away by the winds of war.

Deeds, Not Words, Wanted

Let me repeat. We need deeds, not words, to convince us of Soviet sincerity should they choose to join us on this path.

Since the end of World War II, the United States has been the leader in serious disarmament and arms control proposals. In 1946, in what became known as the Bucharest Plan, the United States submitted a proposal for control of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy by international authority. The Soviets rejected this plan.

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U.S. Deeply Committed

My country remains deeply committed to these objectives today and to strengthening the nonproliferation framework. This is essential to international security.

In the early 1970's, again at United

States urging, agreements were reached between the United States and the U.S.S.R. providing for ceilings on some categories of weapons. They could have been more meaningful if Soviet actions had shown restraint and commitment to stability at lower levels of force.

The United Nations designated the 1970's as the first disarmament decade. But good intentions were not enough. In reality that 10-year period included an unprecedented buildup in military weapons and the flaring of aggression and use of force in almost every region of the world.

We are now in the second disarmament decade. The task at hand is to assure civilized behavior among nations, to unite behind an agenda of peace.

Four Points Cited

Over the past seven months the United States has put forward a broad-based comprehensive series of proposals to reduce the risk of war. We have proposed four major points:

1. Elimination of land-based intermediate-range missiles.

2. A reciprocal reduction in strategic ballistic missile warheads.

3. A substantial reduction in NATO and Warsaw Pact ground and air forces.

4. And new safeguards to reduce the risk of accidental war.

I urge the Soviet Union today to join with us in this quest. We must act, not for ourselves alone, but for all mankind.

On Nov. 18 of last year, I announced United States objectives in arms control agreements. They must be equitable and militarily significant. They must stabilize forces at lower levels which both sides can live with.

The United States and its allies have made specific, reasonable and equitable proposals.

U.S. Proposal Described

In February, our negotiating team in Geneva shared the Soviet Union a draft treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces. We offered to cancel deployment of our Pershing 2 ballistic missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles in exchange for Soviet elimination of their SS-20, SS-3 and SS-5 missiles. This proposal would eliminate what one stroke those systems about which both sides have expressed the greatest concern.

The United States is also looking forward to beginning negotiations on strategic arms reductions with the Soviet Union in less than two weeks. We will work hard to make these talks an opportunity for real progress in our quest for peace.

On May 9 I announced a phased approach to the reduction of strategic arms. In a first phase, the number of ballistic missile warheads on each side would be reduced to about 5,000. No more than half the remaining warheads would be on land-based missiles. All ballistic missiles would be reduced to an equal level at about one-half the current United States number. In the second phase, we would reduce each side's overall destructive power to equal levels, including a mutual ceiling on ballistic missile throw-weight below the current U.S. level.

We are also prepared to discuss other elements of the strategic balance.

Meeting of NATO Leaders

Before I returned from Europe last week I met in Bonn with the leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. We agreed to introduce a new Western initiative for the Vienna negotiations on mutual balanced force reductions. Our approach calls for common collective ceilings for both NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. We agreed to introduce a new Western initiative for the Vienna negotiations on mutual balanced force reductions. Our approach calls for common collective ceilings for both NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. We agreed to introduce a new Western initiative for the Vienna negotiations on mutual balanced force reductions. Our approach calls for common collective ceilings for both NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

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Let me stress that for agreements to work, both sides must be able to verify compliance.

The building of mutual confidence in compliance can only be achieved through greater openness.

I encourage the special session on disarmament to endorse the importance of these principles in arms control agreements.

I have instructed our representatives at the 40-nation committee on disarmament to renew emphasis on verification and compliance. Based on a U.S. proposal, a committee has been formed to examine these issues as they relate to restrictions on nuclear testing.

We are also pressing the need for effective verification provisions in any agreements banning chemical weapons. The use of chemical and biological weapons has long been viewed with revulsion by civilized nations. No peace-making institution can ignore the use of these dread weapons and still live up to its mission.

Issue of Chemical Warfare

The need for a truly effective and verifiable chemical weapons agreement has been highlighted by recent events. The Soviet Union and its allies are violating the Geneva protocol of 1925, related rules of international law, and the 1972 biological weapons convention. There is conclusive evidence that the Soviet Government has provided toxins for use in Laos and Kampuchea and are themselves using chemical weapons against freedom fighters in Afghanistan.

We have repeatedly protested to the Soviet Government as well as to the Governments of Laos and Vietnam their use of chemical and toxin weapons.

I call upon them now to grant full and free access to their countries or to territories they control so that United Nations experts can conduct an effective independent investigation to verify cessation of these horrors.

Evidence of noncompliance with existing arms control agreements underscores the need to approach negotiation of any new agreements with care.

Openness of the West

The democracies of the West are open societies. Information on our defenses is available to our citizens, our elected officials and the world. We do not hesitate to inform potential adversaries of our military forces and ask them to do the same information concerning theirs.

The amount and type of military spending by a country is important for the world to know as a measure of its intentions and the threat that country may pose to its neighbors.

The Soviet Union and other closed societies go to extraordinary lengths to hide their true military spending.

Program of Disarmament

One of the major items before this conference is the development of a comprehensive program of disarmament. We support the effort to chart a course of realistic and effective measures in the quest for peace.

I have come to this hall to call for international commitment to the basic tenets of the United Nations charter, that all members practice tolerance and live together in peace as good neighbors under the rule of law, forsaking armed force as a means of settling disputes between nations.

I call upon the Soviet Union to join the United States in exploring these possibilities to build confidence and I ask for your support of our efforts.

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As in many recent speeches, Mr. Reagan's address was couched in proposals with an insistence on the need for a language today. But some of his remarks in Europe.

After appearing at the General Assembly, Mr. Reagan visited the offices of the United States Mission to the United Nations and then was host at a lunch at which he exchanged warm words with Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Praising the United Nations as "a force for good," Mr. Reagan said that "even at a time of retrenchment," American financial support "has not and will not diminish."

After a rest at the Sheraton Centre, and some remarks to Republicans who were meeting there, Mr. Reagan flew back to Washington this evening.

At no point in his speech today did Mr. Reagan address himself to what many in his Administration agree was a coup of sorts by Mr. Gromyko, who yesterday delivered a pledge from Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet leader, not to use a nuclear weapon first in a war.

Administration officials repeated today that it remained the doctrine of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization that "first use" of nuclear weapons was a deterrent to the threat of nuclear war.

Some in the chamber said later that they disapproved of Mr. Reagan's harsh anti-Soviet tone, which was

not only from other nations, but from their own people. This practice contributes to distrust and fear about their intentions.

Conference on Arms Outlays

Today the United States proposes an international conference on military expenditures to build on the work of this body in developing a common system for accounting and reporting. We urge the Soviet Union in particular to join this effort in good faith to revise the universally discredited official figures it publishes and to join with us in giving the world a true account of the resources we allocate to our armed forces.

Last Friday in Berlin, I said that I would leave no stone unturned in the effort to reinforce peace and lessen the risk of war. It's been clear to me steps should be taken to improve mutual communication, confidence and lessen the likelihood of misunderstanding. I have therefore directed the exploration of ways to increase understanding and communication between the United States and the Soviet Union in times of peace and of crisis.

We would approach the Soviet Union with proposals for reciprocal exchanges in such areas as advanced notification of major strategic exercises that otherwise might be misinterpreted, advanced notification of I.C.B.M. launches within as well as beyond national boundaries and an expanded exchange of strategic force data. While substantial information on U.S. activities and forces in these areas already is provided, I believe that jointly and regularly sharing information would represent a qualitative improvement in the strategic nuclear environment and would help reduce the chance of misunderstanding in the quest for peace.

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America urges you to support the agenda for peace that I have outlined today. We ask you to reinforce the bilateral and multilateral arms-control negotiations between members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact and to rededicate yourselves to maintaining international peace and security and removing threats to peace.

We who have signed the U.N. charter have pledged to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territory or independence of any state.

In these times when more and more lawless acts are going unpunished, as some members of this very body show a growing disregard for the U.N. charter, the peace-loving nations of the world must condemn aggression and pledge again to act in a way that is worthy of the ideals that we have endorsed.

How to Make the Charter Live

Let us finally make the charter live. In late spring, 37 years ago, representatives of 50 nations gathered on the other side of this continent in the San Francisco Opera House. The League of Nations had crumbled and World War II still raged. But those men and nations were determined to find peace. The result was this charter for peace that is the framework of the United Nations. President Harry Truman spoke of the revival of an old faith. He said the everlasting moral force of justice prompting that United Nations conference, such a force remains strong in America and in other parts of the world.

President Truman said if we should pay merely lip service to inspiring ideals and later do violence to simple justice we would draw down upon us the bitter wrath of generations yet unborn. Those words of Harry Truman have special meaning for us today as we live with the power to destroy civilization. We must learn to live together in peace, he said. We must build a new world, a far better world.

What a better world it would be if the guns were silenced, if neighbor no longer encroached on neighbor and all peoples were free to reap the rewards of their toil and determine their own destiny and system of government whatever their choice.

During my recent audience with his Holiness Pope John Paul II, I gave him the pledge of the American people to do everything possible to bring peace and arms reduction. The American people believe forging real and lasting peace to be their sacred trust. They never forget that such a peace would be a terrible boon if the world were no longer blessed with freedom and respect for human rights.

The Words of Hammarstrand

The United Nations, Hammarstrand said, was born out of the cataclysm of war. It should justify the sacrifices of all those who have died for freedom and justice. It is our duty to the past, Hammarstrand said, and it is our duty to the future to serve both our nations and the world.

As both patriots of our nations and the hope of all the world let those who assembled here in the name of peace endorse our understandings, renew our commitment to the rule of law and take new and bolder steps to calm an uneasy world.

Can any delegate here deny that in so doing he would be doing what the people, the rank and file of his own people, his own country want him or her to do. Is it time to stir us no more to the deepest, most heartfelt yearnings of all of our people.

Let no nation abuse this common longing to be free of fear. We must not manipulate our people by playing upon their nightmares. We must serve mankind through genuine disarmament.

With God's help, we can secure life and freedom for generations to come.

Let me repeat, we need deeds, not words, to convince us of Soviet sincerity should they choose to join us on this path.

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We are also pressing the need for effective verification provisions in any agreements banning chemical weapons. The use of chemical and biological weapons has long been viewed with revulsion by civilized nations. No peace-making institution can ignore the use of these dread weapons and still live up to its mission.

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